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Illinois Negro Historymakers.

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY



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Illinois

NEGRO

HISTORYMAKERS

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

ILLINOIS

Negro Historymakers

This booklet was adapted from one with the same title published by the Illinois Emancipation Commission in 1964. The earlier publication was compiled by Carl G. Hodges and Mrs. Helene Levene with the assistance of Miss Helen Horney, Miss Julia Wanless, and the staff of the Illinois State Historical Library.

Illinois State Historical Library

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RICHARD B. OGILVIE, *Governor*

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Illinois Negro Historymakers

THIS exploratory history of the Negro in Illinois represents a pioneer effort to cut a path through a forest of misinformation and lack of information. Primary source material concerning Negroes is very difficult to locate; contemporary records were, for the most part, not well kept. Much of the early information is largely based on tradition and legend. The truth probably is to be found somewhere between the scanty historical evidence and the voluminous personal recollections recorded long after the fact. It is doubtful that any new or startling information has been discovered. This study is intended to gather the scattered facts together for the first time and to present a cohesive study of the Negro in Illinois. The field is an interesting and provocative one, worthy of much further detailed study and analysis.

Negroes first reached the New World as explorers and as servants or slaves serving European expeditions planning to colonize utopias in the Western Hemisphere. Some of the Negroes who accompanied the pathfinders of the New World were free, some were indentured servants, and others were slaves.

As early as 1501 Spain abrogated previous bans and allowed Negroes to travel to Spanish holdings in the New World. Thirty Negroes were in the companies of Vasco Nunez de Balboa and shared his wonder at the discovery of the Pacific Ocean. Negroes disembarked with Hernando Cortez and marched into Mexico, where one of them planted and harvested the first crop of wheat in the Americas. Negroes witnessed the conquest of Peru by Francisco Pizarro, and Negroes carried him to the cathedral after he was murdered by his own soldiers. Negroes followed Francisco Vasquez de Coronado when he led his troops across what is now part of Arizona and New Mexico to the awesome Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Negroes broke trail at the side of the French explorers as they braved the wilds of Canada, traversed the Great Lakes, and trudged overland to the Illinois River. From this tributary they entered the great valley of the Mississippi River, where many pioneer Negroes settled.

The first Negro slaves were brought into Illinois from Santo Domingo by Philip Francis Renault in 1719. He had left France with

two hundred miners and other workmen to come to America to develop a mining operation in Upper Louisiana, which included the Illinois country. En route to America, Renault stopped at Santo Domingo and purchased slaves. He established himself and his crew in the Illinois country near Fort Chartres. His mining venture was doomed to failure and in 1744 he sold his remaining slaves to the inhabitants of the area and returned to France. Following the French and Indian War the Illinois country passed into English hands in 1763. At that time the total population of the area was about three thousand, of which no more than five or six hundred were slaves. In 1778 Illinois became a part of Virginia as a result of George Rogers Clark's expeditions during the American Revolution.

Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, First Chicagoan

The Potawatomi Indians had a paradoxical saying: The first "white man" to settle at Chicago was a Negro. Colonel Arent Schuyler de Peyster, an early British commandant on the frontier, noted in his diary that the first settler was a French-speaking "handsome Negro well educated and settled at Eschikagou." He was Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, and he established a settlement on the site of Chicago about 1779.

It is not certain where Du Sable lived before coming to Chicago. Some say he was born in Santo Domingo; others maintain that his parents were a Negro slave woman and a French fur trader from the Northwest Territory. Du Sable traded with the Potawatomi, as well as with English and French travelers who stopped at his establishment to rest and to replenish their supplies for going on to claim the wilderness to the south and west.

Du Sable's trading post consisted of a very large log homestead, a bake house, a smokehouse, poultry sheds, and a dairy. He also maintained a workshop, a grist mill, a huge barn, and well-managed stables. For that early day Du Sable was a man of wealth and influence.

Du Sable, his Potawatomi wife Catherine, and their children — a daughter, Suzanne, and a namesake son — maintained their home on the site of present-day Chicago for about sixteen years. According to historian Milo Milton Quaife, Du Sable was a "true pioneer of civilization, leader of the unending procession of Chicago's swarming millions." About 1796 Du Sable is said to have disposed of his holdings to a man named Le Mai, who in turn was succeeded by an Englishman named John Kinzie. Du Sable moved down the Illinois River to Peoria, where he lived for a time before moving to the site that is now St. Charles, Missouri. There Du Sable died.

Du Sable's home at Chicago, tradition claims, was the site of the first wedding, the first recorded birth, the first election, and the first session of court in the area.

The Northwest Ordinance Prohibition of Slavery

In 1784, while Du Sable was living in Chicago, Virginia ceded to the United States government her claims to the Illinois country. The slavery issue became important when Illinois, as part of the Northwest Territory, came under the jurisdiction of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. This ordinance, passed by Congress, prohibited slavery and involuntary servitude in the territory.

This provision was upsetting to some of the residents of the Illinois country — particularly to the inhabitants of Kaskaskia, Fort Chartres, and neighboring villages who still held slaves descended from those brought to the area from Santo Domingo by Renault. They considered the clause to mean that they would be forced to give up their slaves, and many of them therefore planned to move across the Mississippi River into territory governed by Spain.

The territorial governor, Arthur St. Clair, interpreted the slavery clause to suit himself, however, and handed down the opinion that the ordinance prohibited the *introduction* of slaves into the territory but was not intended to free those already residing in the Northwest Territory.

The Ordinance of 1787 also provided that “any person escaping into the [territory], from whom labor or service is lawfully claimed in any one of the original states, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labor or service as aforesaid.”

Inclusion of the clause prohibiting slavery in the Ordinance of 1787 is undoubtedly the feature that frustrated later attempts to have slavery admitted legally within the boundaries of the Illinois country. “It is probable,” wrote historian James Ford Rhodes, “that had it not been for the prohibitory clause, slavery would have gained such a foothold in Indiana and Illinois that the two would have been organized as slaveholding states.”

The procedure governing the recovery of escaped slaves was spelled out in the federal government's first Fugitive Slave Act, dated February 12, 1793. This act empowered the owner of an escaped slave to follow him into a free state and arrest him and take him before a court of law. If the owner could prove, by oral testimony or written proof, that said slave was his property, the judge would grant a certifi-

cate allowing the owner to transport the slave back to his place of residence. Any person interfering with such a procedure could, on conviction, be fined \$500.

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 was ineffective. Too many people in the free states, either from ignorance of the law or their own disagreement with it, chose to ignore its provisions. Many cases of resistance to the statutes occurred before the year had ended.

Amendments to the act were proposed as early as 1796, and many of these proposals were resubmitted through the years. Usually they were prompted by the realization of congressmen from the South that the Underground Railroad was draining away their most important resource – slave labor.

The Body of Laws Known as the “Black Code”

Some free states passed laws of their own to give comfort to neighboring slave states. In 1803, under the first stage of territorial government, the governing council of the Indiana Territory (which included Illinois) drew up a “slave code,” or system of long-term indenture, that was virtually indistinguishable from slavery. This indenture system was also adopted in later stages of territorial government and carried over to Illinois when that area became a separate territory. This body of laws was later referred to as the Black Code. Under its provisions anyone who freed a Negro in Illinois had to post a \$1,000 bond, and a free Negro had to obtain a certificate testifying that he was free.

After Illinois was admitted to the Union in 1818, proslavery men worked eagerly to move the new state to the side of slavery. Their idea was to hold a convention at which a new state constitution favoring slavery would be drafted and then submitted to the voters. To manage a resolution calling for a constitutional convention, the proslavery men in the state legislature arranged to unseat an antislavery representative. He was Nicholas Hansen of Pike County. The proslavery man named in Hansen’s place was John Shaw.

At the election that fall, however, a “no-convention” ticket was put into office. There were four candidates for governor, but the real contest was between Edward Coles and Joseph Phillips, who was chief justice of the Illinois Supreme Court, and actively proslavery.

Coles was elected. He was an antislavery Virginian, who had inherited a great many slaves from his father. On coming to Illinois in 1819, Coles voluntarily freed his slaves, giving the head of each family 160 acres of land in consideration of past services.

In the election of 1824 there were 11,612 votes cast. Of these,

6,640 were against a resolution calling for a state convention (and in effect against slavery), and 4,972 were cast in favor of the resolution.

Yet on January 12, 1837, the Illinois General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning abolition societies and approving the United States constitutional sanction of slavery in the slaveholding states. Abraham Lincoln and Dan Stone, who were then members of the Illinois House of Representatives, officially protested against the sanctity-of-slavery section.

Growth of Antislavery Sentiment

Antislavery feeling in Illinois cities in the central and northern sections of the state was evident through the years. William H. Collins and Cicero F. Perry, in *Past and Present of Adams County*, tell of the manumission (freeing) of slaves owned by John W. Stern and James Anderson in Quincy. "[The slaves] had been brought from Kentucky by their masters, and under the existing laws of the state, it was requisite that if freed the master must give bonds for their conduct and that they should not become dependent on the public for support, and must make official announcement of this, which was done by handbills and posters, there being no paper here then published."

A slave owner stood to lose an investment of from \$700 to \$2,000 every time a slave successfully fled his plantation. Such losses caused slave owners and slave states to despise those who helped fugitives to escape.

Hate was also directed at those who used tongue or pen or influence to help Negroes attain freedom and equality.

Two well-known abolitionists whose antislavery activities led them to Illinois were Elijah P. Lovejoy and Dr. David Nelson.

Elijah Lovejoy had journeyed to the West from the state of Maine to settle in St. Louis. There he became an ordained Presbyterian minister and edited a religious journal, *The Observer*. Lovejoy was not a violent agitator. He believed in his heart that *immediate* emancipation for the Negro was too dramatic and reckless a step. He wanted the action to be deliberate and much-thought-about beforehand. He did believe, though, that Missouri should abolish the institution of slavery.

In the spring of 1836 in St. Louis a Negro "free man named Francis McIntosh was lynched at a slow fire in a revolting and barbaric manner." This was the spark that inflamed Lovejoy. He dipped his editorial pen in acid and railed at the decision of a partisan

judge who let McIntosh's slayers go free, stating that they were "beyond human laws."

Missourians read Lovejoy's bitter words and stormed back at him. They destroyed his printing press, and in the night he fled across the Mississippi River into Illinois.

Lincoln said of the McIntosh lynching: "Such are the effects of mob law; and such are the scenes, becoming more and more frequent in this land so lately famed for love of law and order. . . . 'How shall we fortify against it?' "

Lovejoy soon found that he had gone from one unfriendly place to another. Although Alton was in free Illinois, some of the residents were in sympathy with the institution of slavery.

St. Louis newspapers warned that the Alton-St. Louis trade would vanish unless Alton silenced Lovejoy, who was constantly attacking slavery in the pages of *The Observer*. Alton's proslavery businessmen heard the ultimatum and responded by getting a mob together and throwing Lovejoy's printing press into the Mississippi River. Lovejoy promptly bought a new and better press, and it also went into the river.

When Lovejoy's next press was delivered, a number of his friends gathered and vowed to help him protect it. But an unruly group of about thirty men descended on them and set afire the warehouse where the press was stored. Gunfire followed. Lovejoy died with five bullets in his body.

The shots were heard across the land. Echoes carried into homes, churches, schools, colleges, and into the minds and hearts of men. Abolitionism was becoming militant.

Dr. David Nelson was an abolitionist from a totally different background. Born and educated in Tennessee, he voluntarily freed his own slaves and moved to Marion County, Missouri, where he founded Marion College. Later he moved to Illinois, and near Quincy he established Mission Institute for the education of ministers.

Dr. Nelson, aided by daring students from his college and often by citizens of the town, regularly crossed the Mississippi River in small boats to the Missouri shore. At an appointed place the abolitionists would meet the escaping slaves and row them across to Quincy. From there the slaves would be transferred to a "station" on the Underground Railroad about sixteen miles northeast of the town. This station was a red barn on the property of Deacon Josiah Platt of Mendon, Illinois.

Proslavery men in Missouri called these missions of Dr. Nelson's "abductions." Antislavery men in Quincy called them "rescues." The missions were always carried out on Sunday night, for Dr. Nelson

had discovered that the Sunday evening schedule was easiest and safest for the slaves.

It was not long before the wrath of the slave owners reached the boiling point. One night a party of men from Marion County, Missouri, crossed the river on the ice, passed through Quincy to Dr. Nelson's Mission Institute, and burned it to the ground.

Two of Dr. Nelson's students, James Burr and George Thompson — along with Alanson Work who was aiding them — were caught by slaveholders and put in jail in Palmyra. To make sure the judge would convict the abolitionists, their captors insisted on three separate charges for the same crime: "stealing slaves, attempting to steal slaves, and intending to make the attempt." The three men were found guilty in the proslavery court and sentenced to twelve years in prison.

The Dred Scott Decision

Recurring throughout the history of this period is the name of a Negro slave, Dred Scott. Born in Virginia about 1800, Scott traveled with his various owners to Alabama, thence to St. Louis in 1830, and to Rock Island, Illinois, in 1834, to the Wisconsin Territory, back to St. Louis, and on to Louisiana. From that state, Scott's owner left for Massachusetts, apparently abandoning him.

In 1846 Scott petitioned a Missouri court for permission to bring suit for his freedom. The petition was granted. His attorneys contended that his residence on free soil from 1834 to 1838 (in the free state of Illinois and the free Wisconsin Territory) automatically made him free.

After many years of trials, decisions, appeals, and reversals in Missouri, the case eventually reached the United States Supreme Court, and was twice argued there. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney announced the verdict, which denied freedom to Scott. History has always known that denial as the Dred Scott Decision. The court ruled that slaves had no rights which the white man was bound to respect, including the right to use court procedures. It held also that slaves were chattels and that owners could take them wherever they pleased.

Although Illinois was a free state and Scott had resided in Rock Island for a time, the court ruled that that fact had no bearing on the case. But the fact that Scott had lived in Wisconsin Territory, where slavery was prohibited under the Missouri Compromise, had considerable bearing. In effect, the Supreme Court was forced to decide on the constitutionality of the Missouri Compromise. The decision was that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional on the basis of the

Fifth Amendment, which prohibits Congress from depriving persons of their property without due process of law. This decision displeased northerners and emphasized the differences in sectional opinion.

Chicago as an Underground Railroad Terminal

For many years after Du Sable's departure from Chicago in the early nineteenth century, only an occasional Negro filtered into that city from the south. By mid-century a small but steady stream of Negroes had begun to arrive. Many who had started with Chicago or Canada as their goal never reached those places. They halted or were halted in downstate cities — Quincy, Springfield, Peoria. Others were captured and returned to their owners on southern plantations under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 and of state and local statutes or ordinances.

Within a few years Chicago had become the terminal of a secret but effective escape organization for southern slaves—the Underground Railroad. The railroad consisted of secret trails through dense woods, ingeniously contrived hiding places in woodpiles and haystacks, and secret rooms and closets in houses, churches, and barns. The organization also included a small army of white people eager to help Negroes attain the same freedom under the law that they themselves enjoyed.

Some of the routes traversed by "freedom's railroad" involved use of the Mississippi River, which marks Illinois' entire western boundary. Some routes went up the Illinois River, which slashes across the state diagonally, and others wound from farm to farm and town to town. During the existence of the Underground Railroad it is estimated that nearly 6,000 slaves escaped the bondage of the slave states and achieved freedom in the North. Only a minor fraction of this total remained in the state of Illinois.

One Negro who came to Illinois as a free man was Frank McWorter. He was born a slave in South Carolina in 1777 and sold to a Kentucky planter at the age of eighteen. After working as a slave for several years, Frank hired his own time, and substituted an annual cash payment for his slave labor. He then began to manufacture saltpetre and by the time he was forty had saved enough money to pay his owner an agreed sum in return for his freedom.

But he remained in Kentucky until he was able to purchase the freedom of his wife, Lucy. Then the couple and their three free-born children moved to Illinois; thirteen of their children had been born slaves and remained in bondage in Kentucky.

The McWorters arrived in Hadley Township, Pike County, in 1829.

They were the township's first settlers and only residents for two years. As a slave Frank had not had a surname, but the name McWorter was made legally his by a special act of the Illinois legislature in 1837. McWorter built up a successful farm and stock-raising business, and with the money it brought in, he bought freedom for all of his children and two of his grandchildren in Kentucky. In his lifetime, McWorter spent about \$10,000 purchasing freedom for himself and members of his family. When he died in 1854, his will provided funds to free his remaining four grandchildren.

Half a Century of the "Underground"

The Underground Railroad existed and was operative for nearly half a century. Many Negroes chose to go to Canada following the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 because they could achieve emancipation there. After the latter war, many of the free Negroes in Canada left their new homes, journeyed south to the border states, and then led families, relatives, and friends through the "underground" routes they themselves had once taken.

By 1815 many of these routes had been more or less permanently established, and they continued in use for another half century. The end of the Civil War marked the beginning of the end of the institution of slavery for all time. The ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1865 granted freedom to all slaves in the United States (Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had freed only those in states that were in rebellion against the United States).

Written and vocal opposition to slavery complemented the activities of the Underground Railroad and represented far more than romantic episodes in the history of a developing nation. Such opposition *caused* antislavery feeling to spread by giving object lessons in the horrors of slavery and inspired people with as widely divergent talents as those of Harriet Beecher Stowe and John Brown to labor for the freedom of the Negro. Harriet Beecher Stowe worked for freedom with her book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; John Brown, with blood and violence. Such opposition also helped bring about the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which the abolitionists then violated — providing one of the grievances of the slave states that were to bring on the Civil War.

The Underground Railroad in Illinois was, by necessity, a secret and elastic organization. Its "tracks to freedom" might vanish overnight, and a substitute route might be invented as quickly. Its operators were violating laws of the state and of the federal government, but in spite

of the dangers and secrecy of the operations, the years have revealed the names of more than three hundred people in Illinois who were active in helping escaped slaves along the road to freedom. The vast majority of "passengers" across Illinois were slaves fleeing from Missouri and Kentucky, although some were from states as far away as Virginia and Tennessee.

The practice of assisting fugitive slaves probably began as soon as the state of Illinois was established, but the Underground Railroad, as such, scarcely deserved the name until 1835. It was at first simply a number of isolated communities where the escaping Negro could be sure of food and comparative safety until he was ready to travel on to his destination. Later, some avid antislavery men adopted a practice of actually guiding the fugitive slave to the next "station."

Some Underground "Lines"

There were a number of well-established Underground Railroad "lines" that crossed the state, especially in northern and western Illinois. The starting points of three of the best-known routes were Chester, Alton, and Quincy, towns on the Mississippi River that were more or less natural targets for fugitives from slaveholding Missouri.

The first route, from Chester, usually went on to Eden, Coulterville, and Oakdale to a point near Nashville. From there the fugitives were sent northward toward the Illinois River, heading generally for Vandalia, Springfield, or Decatur, and on to Bloomington and Joliet.

From Alton the fugitives were routed by way of Jacksonville to the Illinois River and then along the river to the vicinity of La Salle and Ottawa.

In addition to being a station on the Underground Railroad, Jacksonville (in Morgan County) was the site of much other early antislavery activity.

As early as 1823 the Morganian Society was organized with 100 members from Morgan County. The purpose of the society was to oppose the calling of the constitutional convention which was expected to be proslavery. The requirements for membership in the Morganian Society stated that no person should be admitted "unless he has attained the age of 18, is averse to slavery and is a citizen of the County." And each member was required to take a pledge that he was "friendly to the natural and political rights of man, and will use all honorable means to prevent the introduction of slavery into this state."

The state was dotted with such antislavery strongholds, which served as stopovers for fugitive slaves.

From Quincy, which was one of the most active stations on the Underground, fugitives were usually directed through Mendon, Plymouth, Galesburg, Osceola, and Princeton to Ottawa. From Ottawa there were several routes to Chicago: one proceeded through Northville, Plainfield, Cass, and Lyons.

Another route eastward from the Mississippi led from Rock Island east to Princeton in Bureau County and on to Ottawa. There were few routes in eastern and southeastern Illinois. Kentucky Negroes generally tried to escape through Indiana and Ohio, although some followed the Ohio River to its juncture with the Mississippi and traveled north from there.

Among the "conductors" of the Underground Railroad was John Cross, a Presbyterian minister who was living in Elba Township, Knox County, about 1840. Generally, the activities of such men were ignored, or at least not acknowledged, by their neighbors. But Cross was reported by one of his neighbors, a man named Jacob Kightlinger, and was brought to trial and indicted for harboring fugitive slaves.

Another station on the Underground was maintained by Deacon Josiah Platt at Mendon, Illinois. The deacon and his red barn were familiar to, and loved by, many a fugitive slave who was harbored there. At Plainfield, Illinois, an Underground Railroad station keeper had a room in the center of a barnyard woodpile as a hiding place for fugitives.

Both Peter Stewart of Wilmington, Illinois, in Will County, and Dr. Charles Volney Dyer of Chicago were occasionally referred to as president of the Underground Railroad, although the title was usually reserved for Levi Coffin, who operated out of Indiana and Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dr. Dyer was born in Vermont in 1808 and graduated from a medical school in that state about 1832. He moved to Chicago in 1835 and entered the practice of medicine. He also dabbled in Chicago real estate and by that practice became a wealthy man. He was an abolitionist and as early as 1839 was helping slaves escape to Canada. Before the passage of the national fugitive slave acts, Dyer harbored runaway slaves in his home quite openly, employing them as temporary servants until they were sent on to Canada. His house in Chicago was known as the "central depot" and Dyer was known as the "chief manager." The doctor was a prime supporter of the Northwestern Liberty Convention held in Chicago in 1846 and was appointed chairman of the committee responsible for establishing a National Liberty party paper in Washington, D.C. The paper was later known as the *National Era*. Dyer was personally known to Abraham Lincoln, who appointed him a judge on

an international slave trade commission to adjudicate the disposition of captured slave ships and their cargoes of human beings. He spoke throughout the country for the abolition cause.

H. B. Leeper of Princeton, Illinois, said many years later that the best job he ever had was helping thirty-one Negro men and women over the Underground Railroad during one six-week period. The Quakers in Putnam and Bureau counties (who had come originally to Bond County in 1820) had helped to establish escape routes along the Underground Railroad, Leeper said. Members of their families who still lived in the southern counties sent the fugitives northward.

A Mr. Van Dorn of Quincy reported later that in a period of twenty-five years of service on the Underground he had assisted between two hundred and three hundred Negro fugitives.

Many early Illinois settlers of Scotch and Scotch-Irish descent also supported the antislavery movement. Colonies of such settlers in Washington and Randolph counties were centers for the Underground Railroad. One of these leaders was Robert Ramsey, who first began to aid slaves at his station on the Underground Railroad in Eden, Randolph County, Illinois, in 1844. He remained active in the system until the outbreak of the Civil War. The fugitives he helped came up the Mississippi River to Chester and then followed an old Indian trail to the northeast. The stations on that route were all operated by members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church and were located at Chester, Eden, Oakdale, Nashville, and Centralia. Ramsey had help from John Hood and two brothers, James B. and Thomas McClurkin, who resided in Oakdale. Two Covenanter ministers, William Sloane and one named Milligan, and the congregations they served, operated depots on the Underground Railroad in Randolph County, beginning about 1847. Scores of slaves came to Sparta, from which point they were escorted by Milligan and his helpers to Sloane's area of operation near Elkhorn. From there they were taken on to Nashville. At Sparta, Coulterville, and Elkhorn there was an almost constant stream of fugitive slaves from Missouri, eager to make their way north to freedom.

Other church groups were also active in the Underground Railroad, one of the most noteworthy being the one that had founded Galesburg, Illinois. That group was composed of Presbyterians and Congregationalists united in a religious society under the name of the Presbyterian Church of Galesburg. Opposition to slavery was one of the conditions of membership in this congregation. Because of the activities of this group some historians say that Galesburg was the capital of the Underground Railroad, although Adams County, with forty-three individuals supposed to have helped escaping slaves, disputes Galesburg's claim.

Rev. Owen Lovejoy, of Princeton in Bureau County, was a brother of the editor Elijah P. Lovejoy, who died at Alton. Owen Lovejoy served in both the state legislature and Congress. On the floor of Congress, he was badgered by proslavery members and called a "nigger stealer." On February 21, 1859, Lovejoy made a speech in which he replied to these accusations. "Is it desired," he asked, "to call attention to this fact [of his assisting fugitive slaves]? Owen Lovejoy lives at Princeton, Illinois, three-quarters of a mile east of the village, and he aids every fugitive that comes to his door and asks it. Thou invisible demon of Slavery, dost thou think to cross my humble threshold, and forbid me to give bread to the hungry and shelter to the houseless! I bid you defiance in the name of my God!"

In 1843 Lovejoy had been arrested for aiding and harboring a fugitive slave. He was defended in court by a famous Chicago attorney, James H. Collins. When the Lovejoy case came to trial, a rabid proslavery man is said to have told the state's attorney that he wanted the preacher convicted and sent to prison. To this the state's attorney replied, "Prison! Lovejoy to prison! Your prosecution will be a ——— sight more likely to send him to Congress!"

Famous lawyers often rushed to the defense of clients charged with violation of slavery statutes. James H. Collins, on returning from his defense of Lovejoy, learned of the arrest of a Deacon Samuel Cushing of Will County on a similar charge. With John M. Wilson, another prominent attorney, Collins immediately volunteered his services to Cushing.

Once, before Illinois Judge John Dean Caton, at Ottawa, Illinois, a runaway slave from Missouri named Jim Gray was defended by some of the leading lawyers in the state, including Edwin S. Leland, Burton C. Cook, and Joseph O. Glover. The court decided that Gray's arrest had been illegal since it was made under state law instead of federal law. Gray was discharged from arrest, but the state judge could not release him from the custody of the United States marshal. Nevertheless, Gray was spirited away. Eight men were indicted for that affair, including two prominent Ottawans, John Hossack and Dr. Joseph Stout. Six outstanding lawyers from Chicago represented these men before the bench. The lawyers were Joseph Knox, Burton C. Cook, John V. Eustace, Edwin S. Leland, Edwin C. Larned, and Isaac N. Arnold.

An Adams County history tells of a slave who swam across the Mississippi River from Missouri to reach freedom near Quincy. There he was taken by some friends to Dr. Richard Eells, who gave him dry clothes, put him in a buggy, and started to drive away from the city. The

chances are that Eells intended to take the fugitive either to Dr. David Nelson's Mission Institute or to the red barn of Deacon Josiah Platt at Mendon, Illinois, nearly sixteen miles northeast of Quincy. But Dr. Eells was overtaken by the slave's owner, Chauncey Durkee of Missouri, and the slave was returned to servitude. Dr. Eells was tried and convicted of aiding in the escape of a runaway slave; he was fined \$400 plus the cost of the prosecution.

Antislavery men were stubborn and dedicated to the cause in which they believed. Many cases, such as that of Dr. Eells, were taken to higher courts and often dragged on for years. The Eells case was taken on writ of error first to the Illinois Supreme Court and, after the death of Dr. Eells, to the Supreme Court of the United States. In both cases the judgment of the lower court was affirmed. The decision of the Supreme Court of the United States was handed down at the December term in 1852, ten years after Dr. Eells had tried to aid the Missouri slave to freedom.

About 1842 a group of Quincy citizens attempted to start a program for the education of Negro children. Judge Richard M. Young and 130 other citizens (in the town of 2,686) presented a petition to the city council, asking for funds for the education of Negro children. The city council agreed to make a pro-rata appropriation for both white and Negro children based on a special 1842 census. Under this agreement an appropriation of \$1,200 would have been made to take care of the education of eight hundred white children and \$45 would have been made available for the education of thirty Negro children. But nothing ever came of this project.

Lincoln and Douglas State Their Views

Negroes throughout the nation heard of John Brown and his plan to abolish slavery by making it unremunerative. They heard also about Frederick Douglass, a Negro who had escaped bondage and now held high the torch of liberty for them to see. They heard of Abraham Lincoln's "House Divided" speech made in the Old State Capitol in Springfield. They heard of the 1858 Illinois debates, in which Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas stated their views on the issue of human slavery.

The complex ideas of these men cannot easily be put in capsule form, but some excerpts from their debates are indicative of what they were thinking.

Douglas said at the first debate at Ottawa on August 21, 1858: "Do you desire to turn this beautiful state [Illinois] into a free negro colony, in order that when Missouri abolishes slavery she can send one hundred

thousand emancipated slaves into Illinois, to become citizens and voters. on an equality with yourselves? If you desire Negro citizenship, if you desire to allow them to come into the state and settle with the white man, if you desire them to vote on an equality with yourselves, and to make them eligible to office, to serve on juries, and adjudge your rights, then support Mr. Lincoln and the Black Republican party, who are in favor of the citizenship of the negro. For One, I am opposed to negro citizenship in any and every form. . . . Mr. Lincoln [believes] . . . that the negro was made his equal, and hence is his brother. . . . Lincoln has evidently learned by heart Parson Lovejoy's catechism."

(Perhaps Lincoln thought of his Negro friend William de Fleurville before he responded to Douglas. De Fleurville was born in Haiti and during the Haitian revolution of 1821-1822 was taken by his godmother to Baltimore, where he learned the barbering trade. Later he lived in New Orleans, a city he liked because the French atmosphere was more like that of his native country. But the fear of being captured by slave traders prompted him to travel north; and in the fall of 1831 he arrived, nearly penniless, in New Salem, Illinois. There, Abraham Lincoln is said to have befriended him and introduced him at the local tavern, where he earned some barbering fees. The morning after his arrival, De Fleurville moved on to Springfield, where he did day labor until he could buy the equipment necessary to open his own barbershop. This he did in 1832 — and his shop was the first one in town. It became a favorite meeting place of the town's businessmen, and Lincoln was a frequent visitor. Lincoln handled De Fleurville's legal matters. Before Lincoln left for Washington, he bade "Billy the Barber" a personal goodbye, and on two later occasions the President sent De Fleurville verbal regards from the White House. De Fleurville was active in Springfield civic affairs. He played the clarinet in the Springfield Artillery military band, played the flute and violin at social gatherings, represented Springfield's Negroes at community meetings, and contributed both to his own church, the Catholic church, and other religious groups.)

In answer to Douglas at Ottawa, Lincoln said: "There is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man. I agree with Judge Douglas he is not my equal in many respects — certainly not in color. . . . But in the right to eat the bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man."

At that particular time in history the opinions expressed by Douglas

probably represented the thinking of the majority of his listeners. Lincoln's opinions were less popular.

It has been said many times that by the course he pursued Douglas won the senatorship in 1858 but sealed his defeat in the presidential election of 1860. The course he followed was successful in uniting Illinois behind *him* in 1858, but it was responsible for creating schisms in the Democratic party that contributed to his defeat and to the Civil War.

Still, when the war began in April, 1861, Douglas strongly encouraged his Democratic followers to support President Lincoln and the war policies of Lincoln's administration.

The Purpose behind the Civil War

The war's purpose, in the eyes of President Abraham Lincoln, was a simple one — the restoration of the Union and the submission of the South to federal laws. It was not a battle of the North for political and economic superiority over the South. It was not a moral crusade against slavery. The war was fought to maintain national unity under one federal government in Washington. Nevertheless slavery was to die an incidental death as a result of the war. Slavery, like secession, was to end on the same day that Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox.

The South, on the other hand, thought all along that slavery was the paramount issue of the war. Speaking about the constitution of the new Confederate States of America, Vice-President Alexander H. Stephens said, "The new Constitution has put to rest forever all the agitating questions relating to our peculiar institution, African slavery as it exists among us, the proper status of the Negro in our form of civilization. This was the cause of the late rupture and the present revolution."

Many Northern soldiers saw their first slaves during the Civil War. Like the Southerners, many Northern soldiers thought that the war was being fought "to free the slaves." Most Northern soldiers voiced sympathy for the slaves they met, but others shared the belief of their Rebel counterparts that the Negro was a second- or third-class citizen, a sort of necessary evil.

Many Negro slaves in the South thought, too, that the war was being fought to free them, and they regarded Lincoln as a personal savior. Many Negroes were impressed into Southern armies — every bit of work they did released a white soldier for combat duty — and others renewed their attempts to flee to the free states.

Negroes in free states (including Illinois) who had once been slaves themselves wanted to help those still in bondage. They presented themselves for military service with the Union and asked that prevail-

ing laws be modified so that they could enlist and fight. At first, their requests were denied. Although many Negroes had fought in the War of the Revolution to win liberty for the white man, they were not allowed to fight to help win freedom for themselves. Many influential men pleaded for the Negro. Wendell Phillips, Horace Greeley, William Lloyd Garrison, and Charles Sumner urged Lincoln to permit the use of Negro troops. Lincoln refused.

In July, 1862, however, Congress declared that any slaves captured or escaping from "any person in armed rebellion or abetting it" should be retained by the army and would be "forever free of servitude." Moreover, a slave escaping into a free state would be free unless his master could take oath that he had never given aid or comfort to the rebellion.

As the war progressed, Lincoln became convinced of the necessity of taking a stand against slavery, as many abolitionist groups had long urged him to do. One such group, headed by Chairman L. B. Otis and Secretary E. W. Blatchford, met in Chicago on September 7, 1862, and adopted a memorial addressed to President Abraham Lincoln urging him to issue a "proclamation of national emancipation." A delegation was appointed to carry the memorial to Washington and present it to the President in person.

The memorial, a long and dramatic document, stated that the Civil War "is a Divine retribution upon our land for its manifold sins. The American nation, in this its judgment-hour, must acknowledge that the cry of the slave, unheeded by man, has been heard by God and answered in this terrible visitation. As Christian patriots we dare not conceal the truth that these judgments mean what the divine judgments meant in Egypt. LET MY PEOPLE GO! Your memorialists believe that in Divine Providence you have been called to the Presidency to speak the word of justice and authority which shall free the bondmen and save the nation. Our prayer to God is, that by such an act the name of Abraham Lincoln may go down to posterity with that of George Washington, as the second SAVIOR OF OUR COUNTRY."

On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued the famous Emancipation Proclamation which freed the slaves in all states that were still in rebellion against the Union.

Illinois' Negro Soldiers in the Civil War

With emancipation Negro citizens trooped to the colors. (Some regiments had been organized prior to that time, but they never reached the battle lines.)

The 29th United States Colored Infantry was mustered into service

on April 24, 1864. Company A was from Adams County; Companies B, C, and D were from Cook County. The balance of the troops in the 29th were from the state at large.

It was General Ambrose E. Burnside who telegraphed the Adjutant General of Illinois ordering the 29th Regiment to report to Annapolis, Maryland, for garrison duty.

The regiment was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John A. Bross — a brother of the Lieutenant Governor of Illinois, William Bross, whose articles in the *Chicago Tribune* had helped spur volunteers to enlist in the 29th. The regiment received its baptism of fire at the famous Battle of the Crater at Petersburg, Virginia, on July 30, 1864.

In that battle the Negro troops, and their white officers, were to lead the assault on Confederate positions immediately after a mine was exploded under the Rebel position.

The Negro troops were duly appreciative of the opportunity accorded them to prove their prowess in battle. They were pleased at the prospect of the coming battle and were resolved to demonstrate that Negroes would make good soldiers.

Late in the afternoon of the day before the battle, however, the orders were suddenly changed. The Negro troops, contrary to previous instructions, were *not* to lead the assault.

The mine was successfully exploded in the early hours of July 30, but for some reason the attack was not mounted at once. When it did get under way, it was not in full force. At 6 A.M., the 29th Colored Infantry, along with others of the colored command, was alerted to be ready to join the attack, which was not going well. The 29th was forced to stand idle, under arms, until nearly 7:30 A.M., when it was ordered into the fray.

The crater by that time was a maelstrom of men, blood, and utter confusion. Retreating white soldiers were in the path of the forward-moving Negro troops. The untried Negro soldiers gained ground 200 yards beyond the crater, but they were able to hold it only momentarily. The Rebels were returning to the battle in great numbers and with renewed vigor. Although outnumbered, the Negro troops were ordered to mount another assault.

Officers William H. Flint and Hector H. Aiken of the 29th were among the first to fall in the desperate fighting. Moments later, Lieutenant Colonel Bross was fatally wounded. As their leaders were killed, the Negroes lost organization and became confused. Soon the Rebels were swarming down the slope over the outnumbered Union troops. The Negroes were forced to fall back.

In spite of overwhelming odds, the members of the 29th conducted

themselves with bravery and honor and proved without question that the American Negro was a true soldier. The unit was mustered out of service on November 6, 1865.

The End of Illinois' Black Laws

In the year the Civil War ended, the Illinois General Assembly repealed the state's Black Laws and in 1868 granted Negroes the right to vote. Three years later Chicago Negro John Jones was elected a Cook County commissioner — the first Negro to hold an elective office in the county. Born of free parents in 1816 in Green County, North Carolina, Jones was a free man by virtue of his parentage, but he was tricked into becoming a bondsman in Tennessee. In 1838 he won his freedom in a Tennessee circuit court, and three years later he moved to Alton, Illinois. There he met and married Mary Richardson, whom he had known previously in Memphis.

In Illinois, Jones obtained a certificate of freedom, as required by state law, from the clerk of Madison County. In 1845 he and his wife moved to Chicago. With \$3.50 as his entire stake, Jones set up a tailoring shop. The business prospered, and Jones invested in real estate, which was worth about \$85,000 at the time of the Chicago Fire, October 8-9, 1871. The fire destroyed some of his property but he was still worth about \$55,000 when he died in 1879. Jones was always active in Chicago's civic and political affairs, and his home was a meeting place for abolitionists (Frederick Douglass among them).

Repeal of Illinois' repressive Black Laws became a personal crusade for Jones, and in 1864 he published, at his own expense, a pamphlet titled "An Appeal to the People of Illinois to Repeal the Black Laws of this State." It is believed that this pamphlet was a contributing factor to the final repeal of the laws in 1865.

The State's First Negro Legislator

In the biennium 1875-1877 seven Negroes were serving in the United States House of Representatives and one in the United States Senate. In 1876 John W. E. Thomas became the first Negro to serve in the house of representatives in the state legislature in Springfield. A native of Alabama, Thomas had come to Chicago at the age of twenty-six. He operated a grocery store until it was destroyed in the Chicago Fire. At the time of his election, Thomas was a teacher. He was elected to the house again in 1882 and 1884.

In 1874 the Illinois General Assembly passed a law forbidding

segregation in public schools. The statute provided that school officials should be fined from \$5.00 to \$100 for each offense if they excluded children from public school because of color; any person who by intimidation prevented a colored child from attending public school was liable to a fine of \$25.

At the time of the Chicago Fire, there were about 4,000 Negroes living in the city. During the years of improved opportunity that followed, a small professional class slowly developed. In 1878 a weekly newspaper, the *Conservator*, was founded in Chicago as an organ for Negro thought in Chicago and Illinois. The paper was to be a "means for expression for Negroes to aid in the promotion of the welfare of the Negro group."

In 1885 Illinois Negroes made their greatest legislative gain when they secured passage by the General Assembly of a state civil rights act designed to protect the liberties of Negroes. The law forbade discrimination in restaurants, hotels, theaters, railroads, streetcars, and other places of public accommodation and entertainment.

A Record of Leadership in Medicine

In 1891 a Negro doctor performed a spectacular operation on a human heart. He was Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, who created a method by which the heart could be sutured. He also developed a knot with which the delicate tissues of the spleen could be ligated to prevent hemorrhage of that organ.

Dr. Williams was born in 1858 in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, where he received his primary education. He also attended Stanton School in Annapolis, Maryland, graduated from high school in Janesville, Wisconsin, and then from Hare's Classical Academy. He began his study of medicine in 1878 under Dr. Henry Palmer of Janesville. He received his M.D. from Northwestern Medical School in 1883 and began the practice of medicine in Chicago the same year.

Dr. Williams was a member of the Illinois State Board of Health from 1887 to 1891 and was awarded an LL.D. by Wilberforce University in 1909.

As a result of Dr. Williams's efforts, Provident Hospital was founded in Chicago in 1891. A Negro hospital, it had the first training school for Negro nurses in the United States. From 1893 to 1898 Dr. Williams served as surgeon-in-chief at Freedman's Hospital, Washington, D.C.; he reorganized the hospital and set up a training school for Negro nurses.

In his later life Dr. Williams was a teacher, writer, and speaker, as

well as a surgeon. He was the first Negro to become an associate on the surgical staff of St. Luke's Hospital, Chicago, and was a charter member and fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

Colored American Day at the 1893 Fair

The Negro population of Chicago more than tripled during the years between the Chicago Fire of 1871 and the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. In 1893 the Chicago Negro community boasted twenty churches, a dozen fraternal lodges, three newspapers, and several social and cultural clubs.

The World's Fair offered Negroes an opportunity to demonstrate what they had accomplished in the thirty years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. August 25, 1893, was proclaimed Colored American Day at the fair, and a gathering of 2,500 attended the program. There were speeches, recitations, musical selections, and an address by Frederick Douglass, renowned abolitionist and United States minister to Haiti.

In his speech on the race problem in America, Douglass said in part:

"We fought for your country. We ask that we be treated as well as those who fought against it. We love your country. We ask that you treat us as well as you do those who love but a part of it."

On the platform with Douglass was Isabella Beecher Hooker, sister of Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Also participating in the program was Ohio poet Paul Dunbar, who read an original poem, "The Colored American"; tenors J. Arthur Freeman and Sidney Woodward; and Joseph Douglass (grandson of Frederick Douglass), who played several classical selections on the violin. The *Chicago Tribune* was enthusiastic in its review of the proceedings. The day had been a great success.

The Rise of the Negro Political Leader

As his circumstances improved, the Negro became more actively interested in politics. Early Negro politicians were usually sentimentally inclined toward the Republican party of the Emancipator, Abraham Lincoln. Edward H. (Ed) Wright, who aided greatly in the election of Chicago's Republican mayor George B. Swift, won great political power in the 1890's. At the Cook County Republican Convention of 1894 Wright withdrew his own nomination for county commissioner in favor of that of Theodore W. Jones, since he feared that a deadlock between

the two Negro candidates would prevent either one from being nominated. Two years later Wright managed his own election to the county board.

Wright also displayed considerable political acumen when he refused to vote for an appropriation for the office of State's Attorney Charles S. Deneen (later to become governor of Illinois) until Deneen fulfilled a promise to appoint a Negro as an assistant state's attorney. In 1896 Deneen kept his promise to Wright and appointed Ferdinand I. Barnett to the position.

Barnett was born in Tennessee in 1859 and was brought to Chicago at an early age. He studied law at Northwestern University Law School and edited and published the *Chicago Conservator*, a weekly newspaper. Finally, in 1892, he went into law practice. He became active in politics during the Republican presidential campaign of 1896, after which Deneen appointed him assistant state's attorney — the first Negro to be so appointed. Barnett remained on the staff for fourteen years, and during that time he became expert in the areas of extradition and habeas corpus proceedings.

William L. Martin, another Negro lawyer, was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives in 1898; John G. Jones was elected in 1900; and Edward H. Morris was elected in 1890 and again in 1902.

By 1904 the most powerful Chicago Negro political figure of the first half of the twentieth century had emerged. He was Oscar De Priest, an Alabamian, born in 1871 — his father was a teamster and farmer, his mother a part-time laundress. When Negroes were disfranchised in Alabama after 1875, his parents fled to save their lives because they had been active participants in Reconstruction government.

At the age of eighteen young De Priest struck out on his own and went to Chicago, where he made a living as a painter and decorator. He soon entered politics and in a few years became a powerful leader in the political arena dominated by Republican Mayor William Hale (Big Bill) Thompson. De Priest was elected Chicago's first Negro alderman in 1915. He was elected in 1928 to the first of his three successive terms in the United States House of Representatives, thus becoming Illinois' first Negro congressman and the first Negro congressman from the North.

The Founding of the Chicago Defender

Robert S. Abbott published the first issue of the *Chicago Defender* on May 5, 1905. The paper has been published continuously ever since. Harry Robinson, who operated a flatbed press in a small shop on State

Street, agreed to print the paper; the initial bill was \$13.75 for three hundred copies. Abbott at that time had a total capital of twenty-five cents. The earliest extant paper (September 16, 1905) is handbill size, a six-column four-page sheet.

The Springfield Riot of 1908

Despite many encouraging steps forward, the Negro cause suffered a severe setback in August, 1908, when a useless lie told by a white woman in Springfield, Illinois, mushroomed into an orgy of senseless violence. The lie triggered tragedy only a few blocks from the home of the man who had signed the Emancipation Proclamation, Abraham Lincoln. Before the violence ended, two Negroes had been lynched, four white men killed, seventy-nine persons injured, one hundred arrests made, and more than fifty indictments returned — and the ring-leaders in the affair were never punished.

The Springfield riot was set off by the story of a white woman who said that she had been dragged from her bed and raped by a Negro man who had been working in the neighborhood. The man was arrested, jailed, and indicted.

The white woman admitted, before a special grand jury, that she had been brutally beaten by a white man and that her accusation of the Negro was untrue. But feeling was already running so strongly against the Negro that he was taken to Bloomington for safety. A mob, angered at being cheated of its prey, surged through the Negro section of Springfield, wrecking and burning. A Negro barber was lynched in the yard behind his place of business, and his body was dragged through the streets. As the mob started to burn the body, the state militia, called out by the governor, dispersed the crowd with rifle fire.

The next night an eighty-four-year-old Negro who had been married to a white woman for more than thirty years was lynched a short distance from the state capitol. Five thousand militiamen were needed to patrol the streets to restore law and order in Lincoln's hometown.

The riot brought shame to Springfield as the ugly news spread across the nation and throughout the world. It also brought to Springfield a talented reporter for the *Independent* magazine. His name was William English Walling, and his feature article, "Race War in the North," attracted nationwide attention.

Among Walling's readers were Mary White Ovington and Dr. Henry Moskowitz, New York social workers, already much interested in the problems of the Negro. Another was Oswald Garrison Villard, a grandson of the fiery William Lloyd Garrison. Fittingly, they decided to use

Lincoln's birthday in 1909 as the date to issue an invitation to other persons interested in Negro problems to meet and discuss what could be done. The invitation to the conference read: "We call upon all believers in democracy to join in a National conference for the discussion of present evils, the voicing of protests, and the renewal of the struggle for civil and political liberty."

The conference met in New York in May, 1909, and was an imposing gathering of educators, clerics, judges, lawyers, social workers, and publicists. Among those attending were Jane Addams (founder of Hull House), William Dean Howells, Livingston Farrand, John Dewey, John Milholland, and a tremendously influential Negro teacher, orator, and crusader — William E. B. DuBois.

The conference formulated plans to work for the abolition of all forced segregation and for equal educational opportunities for Negro and white children. It also demanded complete enfranchisement and absolute enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

In May, 1910, in New York City the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which grew out of the 1909 conference plans and in effect out of the Springfield race riot, came formally into being. Moorefield Storey of Boston was president, and William English Walling was chairman of the executive committee. Dr. DuBois was the *only* Negro on the staff. One of his first tasks was the editing of a magazine, *Crisis*, which grew from a circulation of one thousand a month in 1910 to one hundred times that figure within eight years.

The first branch of the NAACP was established in Chicago soon after the parent organization was formed. Within two years there were other branches in other sections of the nation, and by the end of the decade more than four hundred chapters had been organized in the United States.

Although this breakthrough in organizational brotherhood had been easily accomplished, a similar breakthrough in personal and individual acceptance of Negroes by whites and of whites by Negroes had not been reached. And riots were to flare elsewhere in the state.

On May 28 and July 2, 1917, there were race riots in East St. Louis. The Negro death toll alone was estimated at between two and three hundred, including women and small children. The first riot began when several white men beat a number of Negroes after rumors circulated that a Negro had killed a white person. The second riot began when Negroes retaliated against a raid in the Negro district in which shots were fired into homes from an automobile. A committee of the United States Congress which investigated the riots placed the re-

sponsibility for them on white resentment of the influx of Negro laborers from the South, on corrupt city politics, and on the failure of the local police and state militia to do their duty.

The World War I years were troubled times at home. In the decade before and during the war, the Negro population growth in Chicago amounted to a virtual explosion. From a total of 44,103 in 1910 the figure zoomed to 109,458 in 1920.

Two reasons are advanced for this phenomenal growth. First, the preparations for World War I demanded more skilled and semi-skilled labor for the industrial centers of the North. Second, Robert S. Abbott, editor of the *Defender*, editorialized in his paper that the industries of the North offered the Negro more opportunities for employment and cultural advancement than they would find in the Old South. He also implied that the North offered more of that inspirational intangible: freedom.

In the decade 1910-1920, one hundred thousand Negroes lived in a sliver of territory on the South Side of Chicago. Friction began to develop in housing and recreational areas. Some Negro homes were bombed. Young white people attempted to frighten and intimidate Negroes. Throughout the nation the summer of 1919 was marked by a reign of terror known as the "Red Summer." Twenty-five separate riots erupted in American cities between June and September.

In Chicago trouble began on July 27 at a Lake Michigan bathing beach. While swimming, a young Negro drifted into waters customarily "reserved" for white swimmers. Some white bathers ordered the Negro back to the "black water" and threw stones at him. The Negro drowned, and other Negroes in the city declared he had been murdered. His body, when recovered, showed no marks of violence, but the incident touched off days and nights of rioting and death.

For thirteen days a miniature war raged. The casualties? Thirty-eight killed — fifteen white people and twenty-three Negroes. Five hundred and thirty-seven injured — one hundred and seventy-eight white people, three hundred and forty-two Negroes and seventeen of undetermined race. More than a thousand persons, mostly Negroes, were made homeless by the burning and senseless destruction of property.

Illinois' Negro Troops in World War I

While Negroes and whites clashed in racial conflicts at home, Negro soldiers were distinguishing themselves on the battlefield in Europe. These soldiers were members of a military unit that had been organized

in 1895 as the 9th Battalion of Infantry of the Illinois National Guard. It was formed in Chicago with Negro personnel and was composed of a headquarters unit and four letter companies, under the command of Major John C. Buckner. (Major Buckner served in the Illinois House of Representatives, 1894-1896.) Captains John R. Marshall, Adolph Thomas, Charles L. Hunt, and Robert R. Jackson were company commanders. The assigned strength as of September, 1896, was eighteen officers and 407 enlisted men.

On June 28, 1898, the 9th Battalion of Infantry was expanded and redesignated as the 8th Regiment of Infantry, Illinois Volunteers. The new organization was commanded by Colonel John R. Marshall and was composed of a headquarters and twelve letter companies; it drew its personnel from throughout the state.

On July 22, 1898, the 8th Infantry Regiment was mustered into United States service at Camp Tanner, Illinois, for service in the Spanish-American War. After a tour of duty in Cuba from August, 1898, to March, 1899, it was mustered out of service at Chicago on April 3, 1899. The unit was reorganized as the 9th Infantry Battalion on April 18, 1899, and redesignated as the 8th Infantry Battalion on May 6 of the same year. In May and June, 1902, the battalion became the 8th Infantry Regiment, being expanded to include a headquarters and twelve letter companies under the command of Colonel John R. Marshall.

With the increase of hostile incidents along the Mexican border, troops of the Illinois National Guard were once again called to active duty; and on June 30, 1916, at Camp Dunne, Springfield, Illinois, the 8th Infantry Regiment was mustered into service for duty on the Mexican border. After a few months' service in Texas the organization was mustered out of federal service at Springfield on October 27, 1916.

With the situation in Europe steadily worsening, the call again went out for National Guard troops; the 8th Infantry Regiment under the command of Colonel Franklin A. Denison was called out on March 25, 1917, and received into federal service on August 3, 1917.

While on active duty, the 8th Regiment was redesignated as the 370th Regiment of the 93rd Division on December 1, 1917. It served at various times with the French 34th, 36th, and 59th divisions, earning campaign streamers for the battles of Lorraine and Oise-Aisne.

The regiment had reached France in June, 1918. It was sent to the St. Mihiel sector and then to the Argonne Forest, where it remained during most of July and August. In September the regiment took over a sector in the area of Mont des Tombes and Les Tueries. And Illinois' Negro troops helped rout the enemy out of France and into Belgium.

They were the first American troops to enter the French fortress of Laon when it was recaptured after four years of war. The 370th fought the last battle of World War I, capturing a German train of fifty wagons and their crews half an hour after the armistice was signed.

Twenty-one men of the 370th received the Distinguished Service Cross, and one earned the Distinguished Service Medal. Sixty-eight received various grades of the Croix de Guerre from a grateful France.

Demobilized on March 11, 1919, at Camp Grant, Illinois, the organization was reconstituted and federally recognized on August 25, 1921, as the 8th Infantry Regiment, under the command of Colonel Otis B. Duncan.

“New Hope, New Courage, and New Inspiration”

Soon Negro names again made political news. Major Robert R. Jackson, who served three terms in the Illinois General Assembly, later served for nearly a quarter of a century as a Chicago alderman. In 1924 the first Negro was elected to the Illinois Senate. He was Adelbert H. Roberts of Chicago. Albert B. George was elected to serve as a municipal court judge, the first Negro to hold that high post.

Many Negro organizations — political, fraternal, and social — began to hammer at the prejudices which had denied them equality of opportunity. For nearly three decades after the turn of the century no Negro had sat in the halls of Congress, but in 1928 Oscar De Priest of Chicago was elected to the United States House of Representatives from Illinois' First Congressional District.

De Priest represented far more than the First Congressional District, however. He represented the city of Chicago and the state of Illinois and, in the eyes of the Negroes, all the Negroes in the United States. During his three terms in Congress he was in great demand as a speaker. One Negro newspaper remarked editorially that De Priest's seat in Congress meant “new hope, new courage, and new inspiration for the Negro.”

Since the De Priest era, individual Negroes in Illinois and throughout the nation have achieved recognition for impressive accomplishments in a variety of fields. But still today Negroes, as a group, experience inequity, and the state has what is referred to vaguely as a “Negro problem.” In prophetic words Frederick Douglass said at the 1893 World's Fair: “Men talk of the Negro problem. There is no Negro problem. The problem is whether the American people have honesty enough, loyalty enough, honor enough, patriotism enough to live up to their own constitution.”

Highlights of Negro History

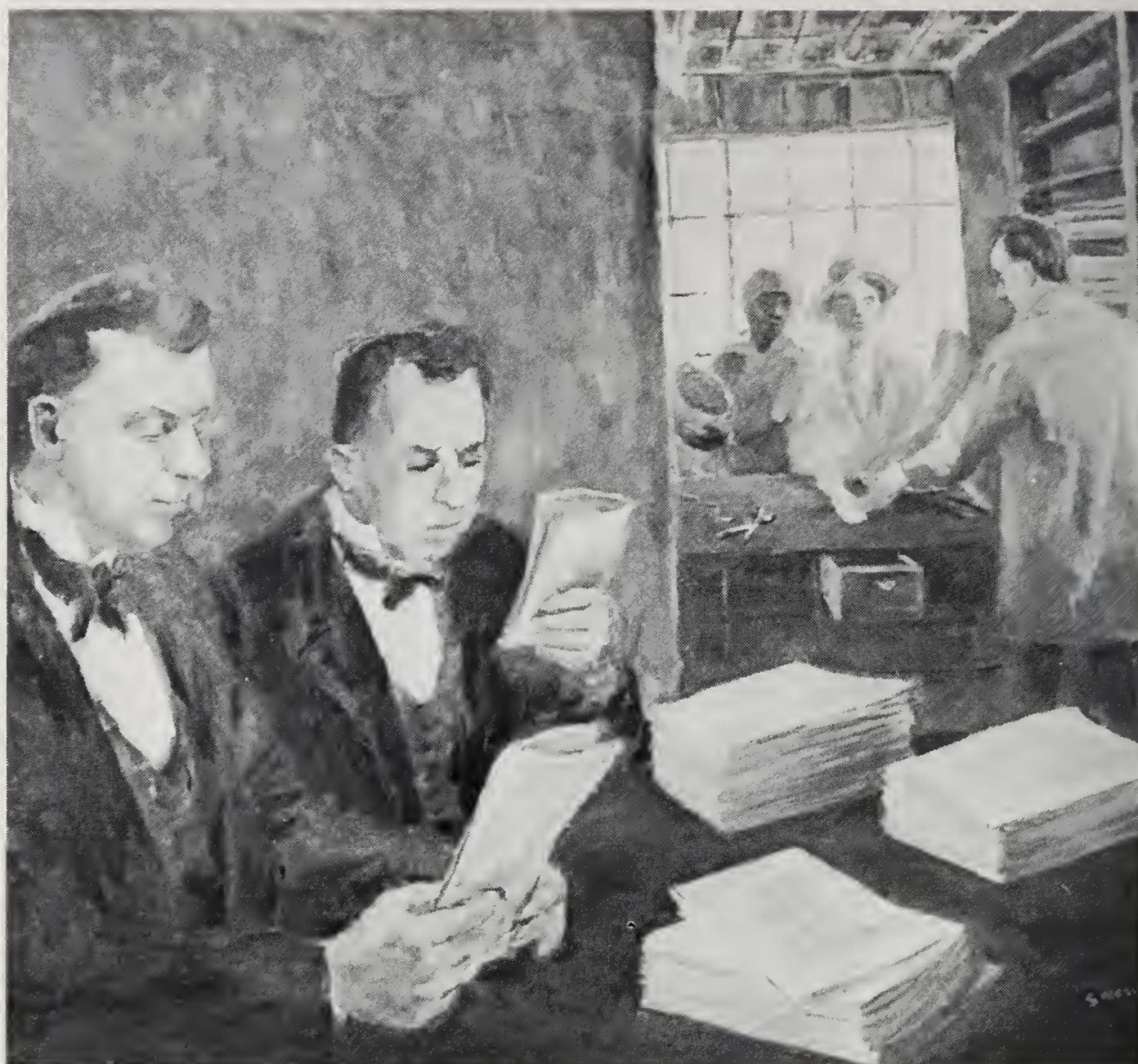
The following photographs are of oil paintings depicting highlights of Negro history. The original collection was commissioned by the Illinois Emancipation Centennial Commission, and was exhibited first at A Century of Negro Progress Exposition at McCormick Place, Chicago, in the fall of 1963. The commission later presented the collection to the Illinois State Historical Library, where it is now housed. The following pictures are arranged chronologically and are representative of the total collection.



Du Sable Envisions a Great Metropolis at Chicago
by BERNARD GOSS



Negroes Receiving Working Papers
by SOPHIE WESSEL



Smuggling Antislavery Literature in 1824
by SOPHIE WESSEL



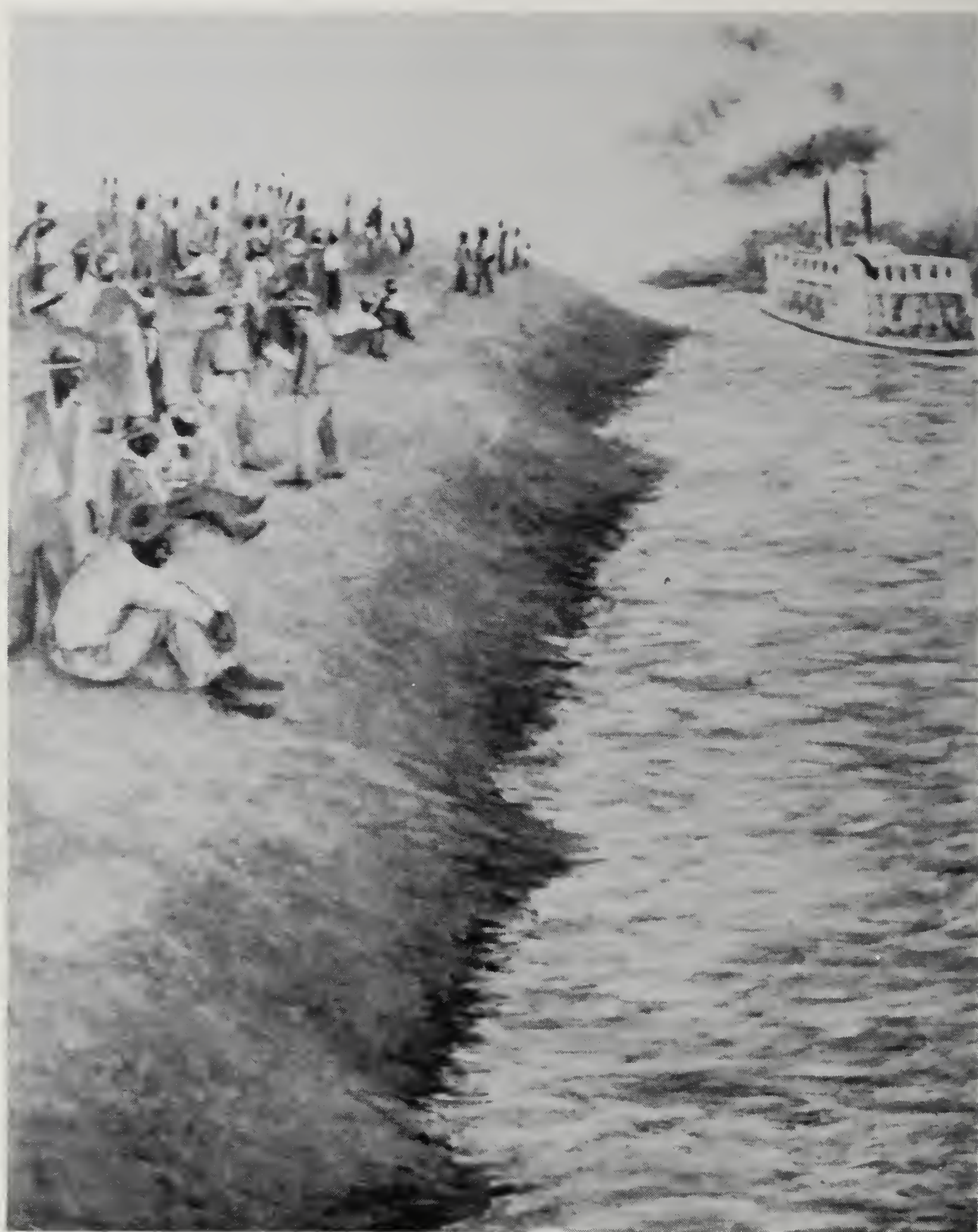
Frank McWorter Surveys His Land
by ANNA McCULLOUGH



Rev. Owen Lovejoy: Abolitionist of Princeton, Il'inois
by SYLVESTER BRITTON



William de Fleurville: Barber and Friend of Abraham Lincoln
by AL PRICE



Contrabands on Cairo Levee
by SOPHIE WESSEL



John Jones Fights to Repeal Black Code of Illinois
by AL TYLER



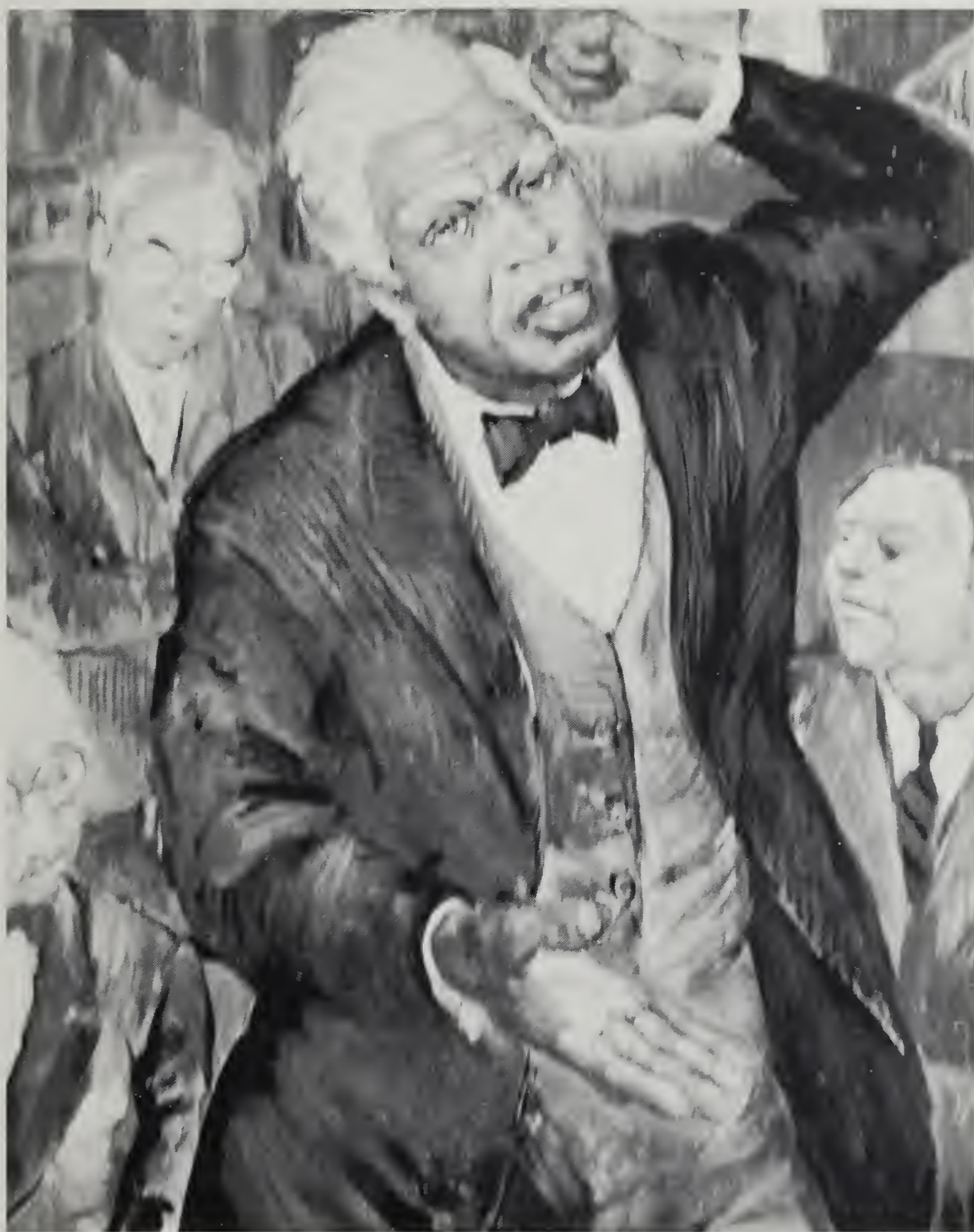
Dr. Daniel Hale Williams: Pioneer of Heart Surgery
by VINCENT SAUNDERS



Frederick Douglass Speaks at Chicago World's Fair in 1893
by BERRY HORTON



Robert S. Abbot: Founder of the Chicago Defender
by WILLIAM McBRIDE



Oscar dePriest: Powerful Politician
by BERNARD GOSS



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